



■ ALIGNING ACTION  
FOR HEALTH<sup>SM</sup>

---

# Behavioral Health and Wellness

## Mental Health First Aid



*Year-End Report 2023*

## Background

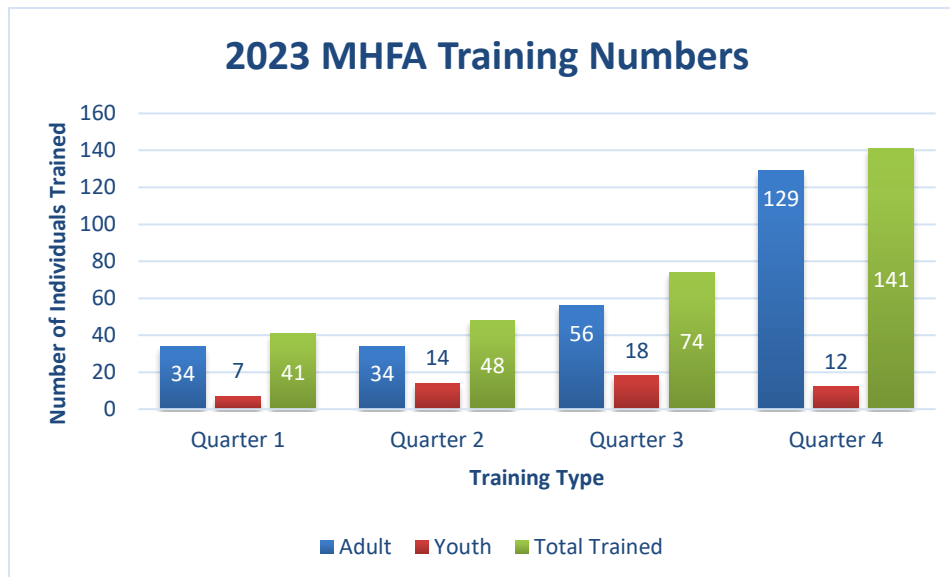
Approximately 3.6% of adults and 62.3% of youth in Louisiana live with serious mental health conditions, according to SAMHSA. Additionally, Louisiana has less than 1% of the 2.5 million Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trained individuals nationally.

Louisiana Public Health Institute’s (LPHI) Behavioral Health and Wellness (BHW) team’s vision is to increase mental health awareness and education to communities in Louisiana. The BHW team hopes to address gaps in Louisiana’s mental healthcare professional shortage by equipping the communities themselves with the skills to be able to identify, understand, and respond to a Mental Health and/or substance use challenge through MHFA training.

MHFA is an evidence-based course sponsored by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing that teaches individuals how to identify signs and symptoms of a mental health or substance use challenge just like CPR teaches individuals to assist in a crisis. The BHW team is committed to training over 1,500 Louisiana residents through two funding opportunities: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – Mental Health Awareness Training (SAMHSA-MHAT) grant and Office of Behavioral Health (OBH). LPHI is also committed to training 100% of the staff. LPHI has invested in training seven employees to become MHFA certified instructors, two Youth MHFA (YMHFA) instructors, four Adult MHFA (AMHFA) instructors, and one dual certified instructor

### 2023 MHFA Highlights

In 2023 the seven certified LPHI MHFA instructors completed 16 AMHFA trainings and 6 YMHFA, for a total of 22 trainings. MHFA trainings began in February 2023 and concluded in December 2023. The largest class size for a training was 27 individuals. The team trained 253 individuals in AMHFA and 51 in YMHFA, with a combined total of 304 individuals trained.



The team exceeded its goal of training 200 individuals in the first year of the SAMHSA-MHAT grant by training 209 individuals. The remaining 95 individuals’ training was sponsored under the OBH contract. Out of the total trained 22 were LPHI staff members.

The team also coordinated the first convening for all MHAT grantees across the nation. The convening brought together all grantees that are using MHFA as an intervention for raising mental health awareness to share challenges, best practices and seek solutions. The team will continue hosting the MHAT Grantee convening quarterly. A total of 44 grantees joined the call where recruitment strategies, participant retention, and data reporting were discussed.

Finally, as part of the New Orleans MHFA Collective, which is composed of NAMI New Orleans and MHSD, the team received funding from United Way to strengthen existing training efforts within New Orleans. Under this grant, LPHI will provide strategic guidance, project coordination as well as certified MHFA instructors when needed. The BHW team hired a new coordinator, Reagan Carmena, with portions of the funding to assist in future Collective MHFA trainings.

## What's Next

Looking forward to 2024, the BHW team is committed to training 270 individuals for the SAMHSA-MHAT grant and 250 individuals for the OBH contract. With both funding opportunities the total goal for the year is 520 individuals. The team anticipates adding a new instructor, Reagan Carmena, to the team, who will be dual certified as well as having one of our current instructors become dual certified. In 2024 the team will be focusing more on promoting and increasing the number of individuals trained in YMHFA. LPHI and the BHW team will start coordinating trainings on behalf of the ReCAST grant.

The team looks forward to continued program growth with new team members, funding opportunities, and community impact by increasing the number of Louisianians trained in MHFA. In the next year the team is excited to continue bridging the gap in the mental health space.



400 Poydras Street, Suite 1250 New Orleans, LA 70130

Phone: 504-301-9800 / Fax: 504-301-9801

[www.lphi.org](http://www.lphi.org)